

CARRYING a chip on your shoulder is all right if you can get away with it. But when there is always somebody around ready to knock it off, it is another thing. There is always at least one of each sort in the Balkans. It is like Tweedledum and Tweedledee:

"Of course you agree to have a battle?" Tweedledum said.

"I suppose so," the other sulkily replied, as he crawled out of the umbrella; "only she must help us dress up, you know."

In the Balkans "She" means Europe. Poor old Europe has taken it upon herself to dress up the Balkans so many times that to tabulate them is wearisome. Every time that she has said to any one of her pawns down there, "Now, you're all hunky dory—run along and play," there has been some one to break it up.

You can fix the Balkans up all hunky dory, but they won't stay—either hunk or dory.

There was the great Bulgarian kingdom at the end of the eleventh century, stretching from the Danube to the Aegean Sea and from the Black Sea to the Albanian mountains. A wicked Greek king surrounded 15,000 soldiers, blinded all but one in each 100 and sent them back to their old king, who was so affected that he died of a broken heart.

IN THE BALKAN THEATRE OF WAR ONE NEVER KNOWS WHO WILL PLAY THE LEAD.

The Serbian empire, covering a large part of the former Bulgarian one, came to a sad end in 1389, when Sultan Amurath I defeated them at the Battle of Kosovo in the famous "Field of Blackbirds." Nemesis came to the Turk in 1912, when the little Balkan Allies, each hating the other, combined for long enough to drive him out of Europe. The Bulgarian swallowed the same dose a few months later, when the Serb and Greek attacked him and, with the Turk, retook most of his gains from the First Balkan War. In the autumn of 1915, when the whole of Europe was at war because of an alleged Serbian murder of an Austrian archduke, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers and caused the great Serbian hegira over the snowy hills of Albania. Now, just a year later, after her triumphant restoration of the ancient kingdom, Bulgaria stands almost deserted by her Central Allies, facing a superior army of French and English on the south, the terrible Cossack and the uncertain Rumanian on the north and the jealous Italian just over the divide at Elbassan, in Albania. There is always a threat in the Balkans, with a considerable degree of fulfillment.

But to come to current history. After the disorganized Serbian army had luckily driven the invading Austrian out of her kingdom in 1914, the Goddess of Retribution, called Nemesis, sent the spotted typhus and killed her soldiers and civilians by the thousand. About the same time the English and French smuggled a battery and some soldiers in civilian clothes through Salonica, placing them at Belgrade for protection from the Austrian army at Semlin, over the Save River. Every nation that could gather them together sent a "mission" over to rid Serbia of typhus. It was like another invasion, but they did some good sanitary work, and with the warm weather the plague disappeared. Serbia was clean and healthful again; she had the promise of the Allies that she should be protected, and she had an agreement with Greece, in case Bulgaria, the dark enemy on the east, ever attacked. Also, she had a tentative treaty with Rumania to the same effect.

With these precautions Serbia felt safeguarded and confident. The batteries exchanged their half-dozen random shots a day across the Danube and Save, while the English major at Belgrade never failed, bombardment or quiet, to take his tea at the American Hospital. The officials commandeered American relief automobiles for joy rides under the plea of seeing if the corn was ripe. The colonel in charge of one expedition asked the American leader to bring his wife to Nish from her summer home at a bathing place. There was no gasoline, and the colonel agreed to furnish it from the government stores in return for the favor. Four days later the colonel's aid approached the American camp with a note:

GREATER SERBIA'S DREAM OF EMPIRE, WHICH "WENT BY CONTRARIES," AS DREAMS OFTEN DO.

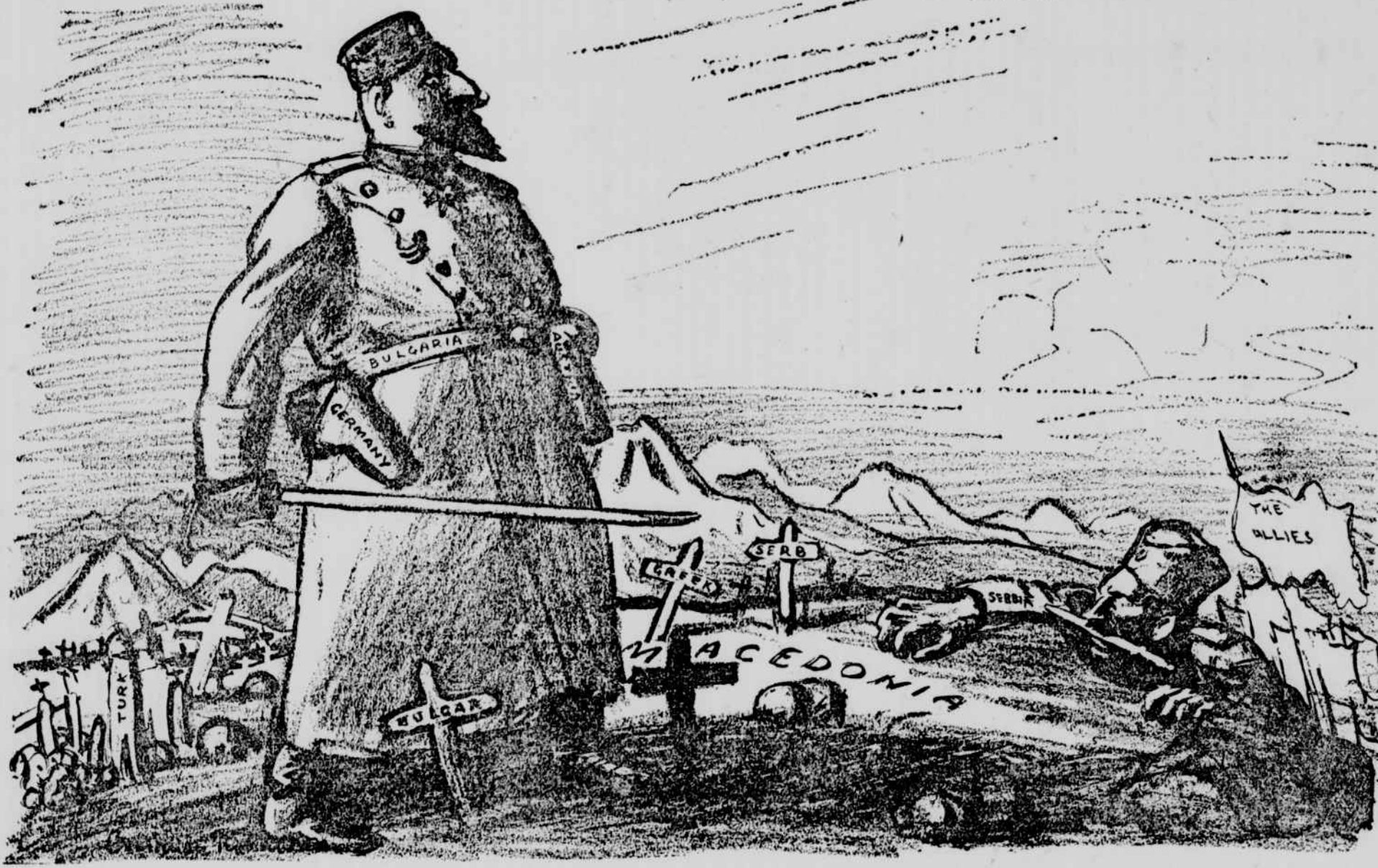
"Would the American leader please to take the wife away again?" He did, and that was the beginning of a siege for jitney service. With the Serb confidence means the end of all caution, and he placed the chip on his shoulder again. Some vague power in a vague somewhere had made an equally vague promise that no harm should come to him, and that was enough for his mercurial temperament. Professional chauvinists began to talk again of the "Greater Serbia" after the war. There was a desire to meet the German and drive him back as the Austrian had been driven. Bulgaria should be crushed from the earth again. Serbia was to be the Power of the Balkans. So the Serbian endings were substituted for the Bulgarian ones in the names of Macedonian subjects, and the tea parties of women in official circles of Nish gossiped of the hardships imposed by cramped living conditions. So they boasted of their 200,000 soldiers—probably more than they had after the winter campaigns against the Austrian and the ravages of typhus—and lived in smug self-content all the summer of 1915.

To be sure there were frequent rumors of a large German army north of Belgrade, but it was never taken seriously. It would take half a million Germans to destroy the 200,000 Serbs, and besides there was the promise of the Allies, not to speak of the Greek and Rumanian. They well remembered that Bulgaria was far from satisfied with the Treaty of Bucharest, and that she still talked bitterly of "San Stefanska," the treaty just preceding the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, by which she had control of Nish, Pirot and adjacent provinces. English diplomacy promised to protect Serbia from that, and she was easily stilled.

GETTING HUNK IN THE BALKANS

By L. L. LITTLE

Cartoon by BOARDMAN ROBINSON



Late in September, unable to get passes, I went without them to Vichegrad, a little town in the edge of Bosnia, 200 miles northwest of Nish. When I asked the captain for permission to spend the night in the trenches he said: "You will see nothing. It is going to rain. Besides that we fought last night—four shrapnel and three mortars."

That was military Serbia.

About the same time I met a little Serbian nurse in a field hospital, always eating. Laughed at her habit, she said:

"My motto: Eat while you can, for you never know what God will provide for your belly to-morrow."

That was civilian Serbia.

THE ALLIES, LIKE THE BROTHER OF MRS. BLUEBEARD, WOULD SURELY COME IN TIME.

On October 4 an aeroplane appeared at Nish from the north, killed six civilians, swerved eastward and spent the night in Sofia. The censor gave me permission to send a cable about it, and I asked the Serbian Press Bureau for certain facts about the raid.

"What raid?" asked the chief.

When I explained he said:

"We know nothing about it, and we shall not until the Press Bureau at Kraguevatz sends us word."

That was official Serbia.

Two days later the Germans attacked fiercely.

ly in twenty places along the Danube, Save and Drina rivers—north and west. They crossed and the Serbs retreated. Most of the soldiery had been sent to the East where the eternal Bulgarian enemy was mobilizing. Rather they were on the way. Just at the moment that the greatest possible number was stalled in its weary journey from Bosnia to Bulgaria there was war all along the eastern frontier. But the Allies were landing at Salonica. Aid was coming as promised. Nish was decorated gaudily by Austrian prisoners for the reception of the French, already reported as entraining. But one dark night five KisselKar trucks backed up to the Foreign Office and took away the records. Still, the hope held. Besides, there were still the Greeks and Rumanians. Then Venizelos resigned as Prime Minister of Greece, and Serbia was told that the Greek would fight the Bulgar if he came alone; not if he came with the German and Austrian. Even at that the Minister of War took time to write me a special permit to photograph the detaining French at Nish. The Allies would certainly come in time. Children stopped their homely street games to wave the tricolor wildly in the streets, imitating the faith of their elders. Returning wounded told in Nish that the German would not fight.

"When we take a strong position," they complained, "the German goes around."

Balkan guerilla warfare would not suffice

against the Teuton. Cannon were scarce in the Balkans, and must be saved at all cost. Rear guard infantry fought against advancing artillery. General Gievchevitch, of the Army in Defence of Belgrade, had as his proudest boast that he had never lost a gun. He hadn't, but they were all ahead of his retreating forces.

Serbian wounded from the Bulgarian front made another sort of complaint against the Bulgars!

"IF THE ALLIES WOULD ONLY COME," BUT THE BULGARS AND THE GERMANS CAME INSTEAD.

"They fight like devils. We can beat men but not demons." It was the vaunted bayonet fighting that drove them back on that front. As in 1885, the terrible Bulgarian cry, "Na pret, na nosh," or "On with the knife," was sufficient to move the Serb back to a new position.

It is only fair to say that the Serb fought valiantly and did terrible damage until forced to take his first step backward.

"If the Allies would only come!" was the official cry in Nish, immediately voiced by the masses. "If the Allies would only come!"

But the Bulgars slipped across the hills at Vranja south of Nish, cut the railway line and destroyed the bridge. The Allies would

never come now, and black despair replaced the pride of the summer. There lies the real tragedy of Serbia—the loss of faith in herself through loss of faith in the Allies. Another band of Bulgars came across the hills north of Nish. Pirot, an almost impregnable pass on the east between the two invading marauders, was threatened on both flanks, and they must withdraw to Nish. Delay meant being surrounded. In that it was typical of some part of the Serbian army continuously. A bad break anywhere meant annihilation. So they all retreated, and retreat means defeat with them. After that it was a funeral dirge for the Serb, while for the invaders it became a triumphal march.

The lines of German, Austrian and Bulgarian constantly converged. The free Second Bulgarian army to the south had little trouble with the Allies from Salonica, for they came too late to prepare real resistance. The Allies withdrew into "neutral" Greece, and the Serbs left a frozen and starved soldier every 500 yards for fifty miles in the canyon of the Ibar. The "Hunky Dory Spotless Land" of Serbia had become the former home of the now Wandering Slav.

Bulgaria was greeted all along the line with cheers and flowers. The first scouts to enter Nish resembled travelling bouquets when they reached the centre of town. Women and children ran into the streets to kiss their hands, their dirty clothes, and to shower them with chrysanthemums. In Scoplye bands of gypsies

and Turks harried the retreating Serbs from behind typhus graves with stolen rifles, and then joined the Bulgars as irregulars. West of Scoplye, in the neighborhood of Tetovo, where for a month previously fires on the hillsides had shown the last of Albanian villages burned by Serbian comitadjes, the population was not averse to a new ruler, no matter who. Far to the south of Macedonia, where the population is admittedly largely Bulgarian, hundreds of deserters from the Serb army were identified by Mayor or priest, and turned into Bulgarian gendarmes. The old nation was reestablished; San Stefanska and Bucharest were avenged. There, however, it halted. Although Bulgaria hates and despises France, she loves England. To Russia she owes her freedom from the Turk. Anyhow, she stopped to think over her triumph. Tutored by the Allies in diplomacy as well as in military matters, she had drawn a lesson from England and refused to say whether she would fight until the time was more than ripe. "Russia is so good-natured," the Bulgars say, "that she will forget it in ten years." England had already offered her a division of Macedonia—perhaps she could be bought off later. At least, Macedonia was hers.

BULGARIA'S POSITION TO-DAY IS SIMILAR TO SERBIA'S ONE YEAR AGO.

Railroads were rebuilt. Russian prisoners made new roads and repaired the old ones. During the winter civil government was established. The names which Serbia had changed to the "vitch" ending were changed back to "off," "eff" or "ov." The underground church at Scoplye, disputed between Serb and Bulgar for 500 years, had a Bulgarian priest installed, and the pillars were painted with bright red, green and white so that they resembled barber poles, but they proved the nationality. Quarters were established where peasants might present their claims for goods confiscated by Austrians, Bulgars and Germans, and get money in return. These I saw, and they might be called good—but money in a marauded land where there is nothing to buy gives little relief. The Germans found other needful places for their soldiers—Galicja and Verdun. Austria withdrew many of her men to Italy. Bulgaria was left with a more than doubled area to be protected and no additional forces.

Worse than this, Russia went south in the Caucasus, and Turkish forces held in reserve against the Salonica threat were needed elsewhere. Forces at Salonica mounted by the thousands. Italy still retained a port and perhaps 100,000 men in Albania. Russia became unmanageable again in Galicja, and the Rumanian again was restless. Bulgaria is superstitious, and she well remembers how she was surrounded by hostile forces in the second Balkan war; brought to her knees, in fact. Careful introspection will remind her that her present condition is identical with that of Serbia a year ago. Rumania and Russia to the north, French and English to the south, with Italy on the west; her own allies extremely busy somewhere else.

"THERE'S A CRY FROM MACEDONIA, COME AND HELP US," STILL HOLDS TRUE IN THE BALKANS.

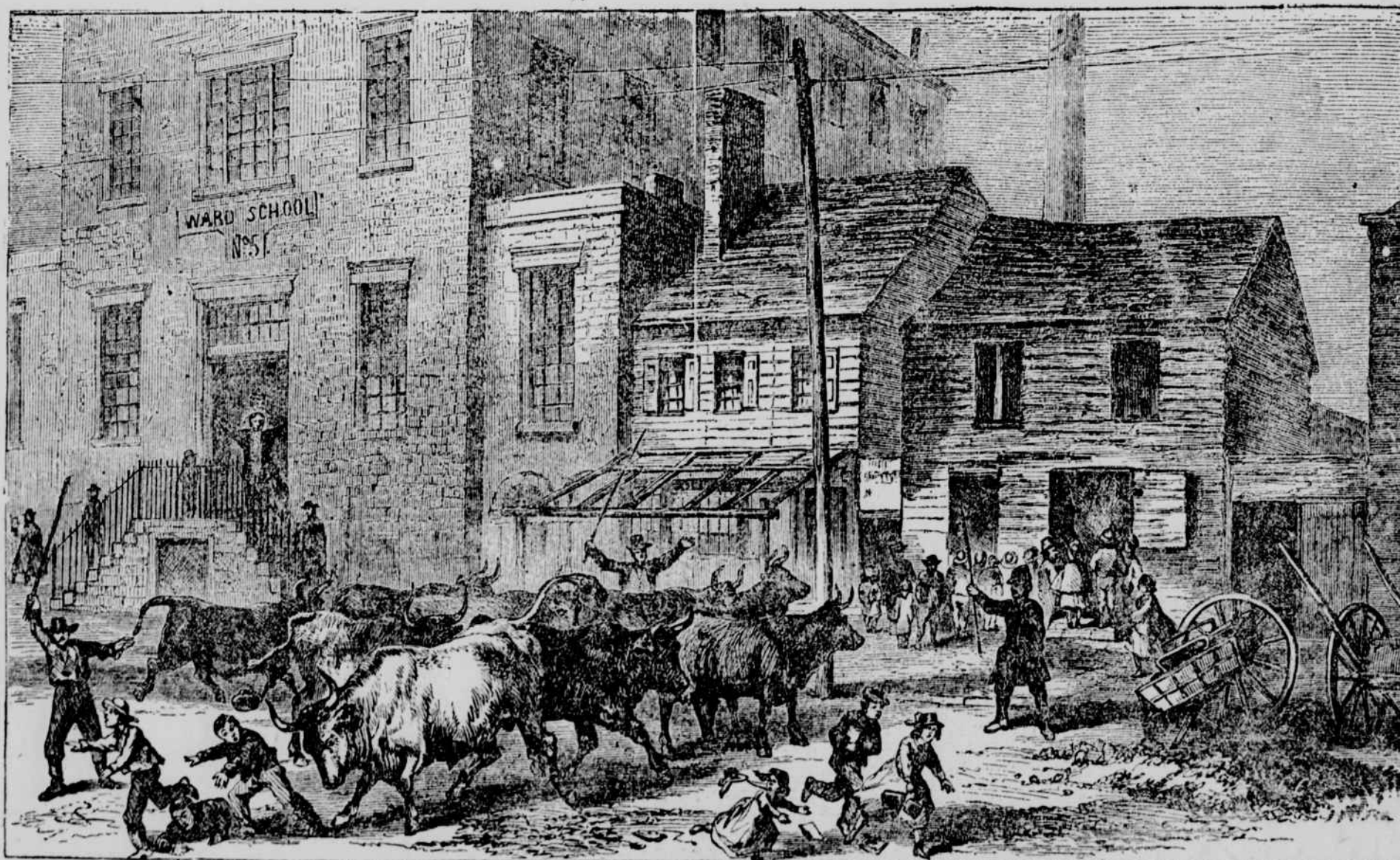
She has this to her advantage, however, which Serbia did not have. The Allied army will find its forces constantly diverging instead of converging, as was the case with the Austro-German-Bulgar invasion of a year ago. From the south the Allies must go in at least three directions. Mainly north along the Vardar River and the railroad, but also up the Struma Valley towards Kustendil and Sofia on the east, and into the Prespa sea basin and Monastir over a divide to the west of the main attack. Thousands of Russian prisoners have changed the traditional morass roads of Serbia into military roads paved with rock taken from the hillsides. Although the Verdun attack had begun, there were forty huge mortars lying idly in a village just south of Nish when I left the Bulgarians in the spring. There were forty German motor trucks working between Veles and Monastir, with twice that number lined up in German precision in the market places of Nish. Rumor had it that the Germans were building a railroad from the main line across the 100 kilometres to Monastir. Certain it is that after making arrangements to send a party of Americans out along this route they suddenly changed their minds and had them go the longer, harder way over Babuna Pass to Veles. Scoplye was filled to overflowing with military goods of all descriptions, being loaded for shipment southward, where 50,000 Germans lay awaiting the probable main attack of the Salonica Allies. On their flanks lay the two Bulgarian armies. Czar Ferdinand, able Hungarian imitator of Louis Napoleon III, was touring the country in automobile, as were his two sons, the Crown Prince and his younger brother, attending church, meeting the people "restored" to their own "Mother Country," and being covered with honors by the Kaiser at the famous conference of Nish. Two famous physicians from Vienna and Berlin, who had been attending King Constantine of Greece, came 'cross-country to Monastir, accompanied by a man in civilian clothes who appeared at mess that night in the uniform of the Teuton Jäger. Spies constantly crossed the border into Greece, bringing anything you wished, from letters to beer, out of Salonica. The Austrian Consul at Monastir had an Athens paper only two days old.

"How is it possible?" he was asked. "Poaching," he answered laconically in perfect English. "Why am I Consul if I can't poach?"

Some sage is reputed to have observed that the mills of the gods grind slowly, with a tag added saying that the result is exceedingly fine. The Biblical call of "Come over into Macedonia and help us" has rung down the ages and still rings. Always there is some one ready to answer, "Now you're hunky dory."

But somehow the Balkans refuse to stay "hunked."

Despite the Pessimists, New York Is Progressing



For example, we no longer locate a public school a few feet or so from a slaughter house. The health authorities might now see reasonable objections to such a team, but in the old days of New York the unsavory shack in the picture was but

one of a number of slaughter pens in the Fourteenth Ward. "And children, coming home from school, look in at the open door." You can see them doing it. The principal on the school steps seems disturbed about something.